

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7305

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AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 12914

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, EG

SUBJECT: LABOR LEADERS BULTIYYA AND GHARIB MAY BE RESURGING

1. WE DISCUSSED SEPTTEL POSSIBILITY THAT MINMANPOWER/ICATU SYG BULTIYYA, WHO HAS BEEN SLATED TO LEAVE GOVERNMENT AS REQUIRED BY ICATU RULES, MAY INSTEAD BECOME CANDIDATE FOR ALO DIRECTORSHIP. ICATU ARRANGEMENT WAS CONGENIAL TO GOE, WHICH WAS SEEN TO FEEL IT HIGH TIME THAT BOTH BULTIYYA AND RECENTLY OUSTED EGYPTIAN FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS (EFTU) PRESIDENT GHARIB LOSE DIRECT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR LABOR IN EGYPT. BOTH MEN, BOTH FORMER LABOR MINISTERS AND EFTU PRESIDENTS, WERE RECONED PRETTY WELL WASHED UP.

2. NOW, AS PUTATIVE DEPARTURE OF BULTIYYA FROM GOVERNMENT DRAWS NEAR, GOE IS BEING FACED WITH NEED TO MAKE HARD DECISIONS CONCERNING FUTURE OF MANPOWER MINISTRY. BULTIYYA AND GHARIB HAVE BOTH BEEN ACTIVE BEHIND THE SCENES AND CIRCUMSTANCES HAS BRIGHTENED THEIR FUTURE OUTLOOK, GOE,
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ACCORDING TO EFTU GODDIP, HAS ACTIVELY CONSIDERED OFFERING

BULTIYYA A DEPUTY PRIME MINISTERSHIP TO GO ALONG WITH HIS MANPOWER PORTFOLIO TO KEEP HIM ON BOARD. REASON IS SAID TO BE THAT SILVER-TOUNGED BULTIYYA HAS TALKED GOE INTO BELIEF THAT HE WILL BE ABLE TO USE HIS INFLUENCE WITH WORKERS TO KEEP LID ON TENSE LABOR SITUATION IN NEXT FEW YEARS. HE SAID TO BE HEDGING HIS BETS, PREFERRING ALO OR, IN A PINCH, MINISTRY TO ICATU SLOT. GOE, ON OTHER HAND, UNDECIDED AS TO WHAT TO DO ABOUT LOST GROUND IN ICATU THAT THIS IMPLIES. PROBLEM THAT HE UNIVERSALLY RECOGNIZED TO BE TERRIBLE MINISTER IS SECONDARY CONSIDERATION.

3. IF BULTIYYA LEAVES GOVERNMENT, HOWEVER, SITUATION FAVORS GHARIB'S REEMERGENCE AS MINISTER IN NEW CABINET. WHAT HAS BEEN SEEN IN PAST MONTHS AS GOOD POSSIBILITY THAT GOE WOULD CHANGE ITS HABITS AND APPOINT A QUALIFIED TECHNOCRAT AS MINISTER NOW APPEARS LESS LIKELY. EFFECTIVELY AGAINST ITS OWN INTERESTS, LABOR HAS PRESSURED GOE TO ADHERE TO TRADITION THAT LABOR MINISTRY BE RESERVED FOR WORKER. ADDITIONALLY, GOE PRECEIVES NECESSITY OF HAVING BONA FIDE WORKER IN CABINET BUT CANNOT CONCEIVE OF SLOT OTHER THAN LABOR. GHARIB'S CANDIDACY, LIKE BULTIYYA'S REMAINS ALIVE BECAUSE OF HIS STANDING AS ONE OF FOUNDING FATHERS OF LABOR MOVEMENT AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, THERE NO OTHER CANDIDATE AVAILABLE WHO BROADLY ACCEPTABLE TO LABOR LEADERSHIP. FACT THAT HE, TOO, CONSIDERED INCOMPETENT MINISTER LOST IN SHUFFLE.

4. NONE OF ABOVE AUGURS WELL FOR LABOR MOVEMENT. IF EITHER ONE IS NEXT LABOR MINISTER, PRESENT STAGNATION OF MANPOWER PLANNING AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT WILL BE LIKELY TO CONTINUE, SINCE BOTH LACK IMAGINATION AND SKILLS NECESSARY TO MAKE NEEDED REFORMS IN MINISTRY.
MATTHES

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